



**U.S. Department of Justice**

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**For Immediate Release:**

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**EVENT: Indictment**

**Defendant: Deondre Byrd et al**

**FOUR WASHTENAW COUNTY RESIDENTS  
INDICTED ON DRUG AND MURDER CHARGES**

***Federal charges brought after five-year "cold case" investigation***

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A federal grand jury in Detroit has returned an indictment against Deondre Byrd, 31, Terrance Smith, 24, Eric Murray, 28 and Ronald Henderson, 29, on drug and murder charges in relation to the June 10, 2001 killings of three persons in Ypsilanti, Michigan, United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy said today.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Acting Special Agent in Charge Thomas Brandon, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Commander Dave Egeler, Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office and Captain Annemarie Gibson, Commander of East Region Special Investigation Division, Michigan State Police.

According to the four-count indictment, which was returned on June 21, 2006 and unsealed today, in June, 2001, Byrd, Smith, Murray and Henderson planned an armed home invasion at 655 Oswego, Ypsilanti, Michigan for the purpose of stealing controlled substances

and money. When the four men arrived at the home, Murray and Henderson waited outside the home while Byrd and Smith, wearing masks and carrying firearms, entered the residence. Once inside the home, Byrd shot the family dog, and when shot 14 year old Jesse Post in the head after Jesse became upset over the dog. Byrd and Smith ordered Willie Lamont Jones, at gunpoint, to retrieve any drugs and money in the home then discharged the firearms, killing Willie Lamont Jones, 30, his girlfriend Gerylanne Harris, 40. Byrd and Smith then took crack cocaine, marijuana and currency from a back bedroom, and shot Gerylanne's son, Jesse Post, six more times as they left the home.

"The heinous murders alleged in the Indictment, linked as they so often are with drug trafficking, show how illegal drugs can spawn violence and brutal behavior", said United States Attorney Murphy. "The local and federal agencies showed persistent determination is pursuing this case."

Acting Special Agent in Charge Thomas Brandon, ATF said, "This indictment demonstrates what can be accomplished when all levels of law enforcement bring their particular expertise to bear in a criminal investigation."

"The investigation into this mass murder has consumed a vast amount of time and effort by our deputies, detectives and the community for the last five years," said Commander Dave Egeler of the Washtenaw County Sheriff's Office. "It is very rewarding to bring the case to closure by bringing the responsible persons to justice."

"The Michigan State Police is proud to be part of the unrelenting diligent and cooperation between agencies that brought these suspects to justice after 5 years," said Captain Gibson.

Defendants Byrd, Smith and Henderson are all currently serving prison time on unrelated charges. Defendant Murray was arrested today in Tampa, Florida.

A conviction on the charge of Conspiracy to Distribute Cocaine Base and Marijuana carries a statutory maximum penalty of 40 years in prison while a conviction on the charge of Murder carries a statutory maximum penalty of death. Any sentence in this case will be

imposed under the federal Sentencing Guidelines based on the nature of the offense and the criminal background, if any, of the defendants.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government's burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case could not have been possible without the coordinated efforts of the special agents of the ATF, Washentaw County Sheriff's Department and the Michigan State Police. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Diane Marion.